



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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March 7, 2011

Testimony in Support of:

H. B. No. 5203 AN ACT AUTHORIZING AN AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION ON THE LANDS OF THE SOUTHBURY TRAINING SCHOOL

Submitted by: Donald Tuller, President, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and members of the Environment Committee:

We urge your support of Committee Bill 5203, concerning the saving of the remaining farmland at the Southbury Training School from being converted to non agricultural uses by transferring the development rights to another non profit group responsible for permanently perpetuating the agricultural use of that land. I think that we all used to think that if the State of Connecticut already owned prime farmland, it was safe from conversion to other uses. The current system that allows elected officials to sponsor bills that transfer state owned land to municipalities, has been used to convert valuable farmland to other uses. It's very ironic to have millions of taxpayer dollars expended to buy the development rights on privately owned farmland, while thousands of acres of state owned farmland that could be permanently protected for agricultural use, at little of no taxpayer expense, sit, essentially unprotected. These acres at the Southbury Training School are just some of the farmland that could be protected. This is a really good thing for you to do. Please pass this bill. It will be an important forward step for farmland preservation that doesn't have a large price tag.

Thank you: Don Tuller President of the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association